

PLANTAGINACEAE

27. *PLANTAGO MAJOR* L.

Semilla de llantén. Masorcita de llantén. The seeds of plantain are planted in Mexican gardens because of the medicinal use of the plant, which is commonly boiled and its decoction drunk as a remedy for dysentery or diarrhea.

"*Semilla de llantén. Mazorquita de llantén.* The greater part of these contain in their seeds inverted sugar emulsion; also a glucoside that can be crystallized, identical with the aucubine of *Aucuba japonica*. The whole plant is used as an astringent, and its juice is employed in folk medicine as a febrifuge, and against the bites of rattlesnakes (!). It does not give results." (*Farmacopea Latino-Americana*, p. 432).

COMPOSITAE

28. *CHRYSACTINIA MEXICANA* Gray

Damiana. Hierba de San Nicolás. The Mexican women esteem this small aromatic shrub, which they boil and drink as a tea in the belief that it is helpful during pregnancy.

"Various extracts from this plant have been given to animals, and result non-tonic and have no physical action(!). The decoction and tincture of the plant have been applied to see if the plant had any tonic effects. The results so far have been nil, but the number of experiments to date has not been sufficient to prove whether or not it exercises any tonic action." (*Farmacopea Latino-Americana*, p. 454).

29. *ARTEMISIA MEXICANA* Willd.

Istafiate. This is a common Mexican herb remedy, the decoction being drunk by children for colic. Adults sometimes drink it in liquor. The plant has a bitter flavor.

"It is used in Mexico as a substitute for true *ajenjo* (*Artemisia Absinthium*; from which absinthe is made) . . . since it has very similar properties. It contains an essence and santonine, the latter in the inflorescences to 1.24%.

"The tincture does not produce any action local or general, and is not a tonic. It retards the action of the gastric juice, and slows up digestion.

"Its essence paralyzes the movements of the frog, leaving its sensibility intact, however. It appears less poisonous than the essence obtained from *Artemisia Absinthium*. The plant may be employed as an anthelmintic, and to modify sensibility. There is a common folk belief that it works as a stomachic. In some cases it appears to operate as a light aperitive." (*Farmacopea Latino-Americana*, pp. 306-7).

30. *BRICKELLIA* SP.

Pestón. Gathered from the fields and saved to boil, the decoction being used as a purgative.

31. *CIRSIIUM UNDULATUM* (Nutt.) Spreng.

Cardo santo. The decoction of this native thistle is used for bathing swellings.

32. *DYSSODIA ACEROSA* DC.

Hierba del arriero. This is an aromatic field weed which is dried, and its decoction drunk as a purgative.

33. *FLOURENSIA CERNUA* DC.

Hojasén. This plant is a resinous shrub, that is gathered from the fields, and a small amount of the decoction drunk as a purgative. It is so strong in action that only a little is taken.

34. GNAPHALIUM WRIGHTII Gray

Manzanilla del río. This is a woolly herb from the Sierra Madre which is brought to Chihuahua by the Mexicans. It finds a sale, since they think its decoction good for colds. It may also be used as a wash for sores and ulcers.

35. MATRICARIA COURRANTIANA DC.

Manzanilla de Castilla. This small white daisy is a favorite plant in Mexican gardens, its decoction being used as a hot douche.

M. Chamomilla L. (Compositae). "In the markets the heads are found for sale, with more than 5% of the stalks and foreign substances. . . . The odor of the plant is aromatic and agreeable, its taste aromatic and sour. Contains a volatile acid dark blue in color which is soluble in alcohol. It is a tonic and stimulant to a dose of 16 grains. In large quantity it is an emetic." (*Farmacopea Latino-Americana*, p. 348).

36. TAGETES ERECTA L.

Flor de muerto. Sempual. The garden marigold is grown in Mexican gardens for use and sale as a medicine, as well as for ornament. Its decoction is thought to be an excellent remedy for diarrhea.

37. TAGETES LUCIDA Cav.

Hierba anís. The decoction of this strong-scented plant is drunk for colic and wind on the stomach. It is often taken with honey.

"This is one of the most widely used medicinal plants of western Mexico. The species has a wide distribution. The plants gathered by the country people are made up in small bundles and dried, and then put away for use. It is made into a tea, and supposed to have numerous virtues, including efficacy against scorpion bites, fever, ague, etc.

"Dr. Palmer says that in Colima it is made into an insect powder. This is the same plant as the Santa María of the Cora Indians." (Rose: Notes on the Useful Plants of Mexico, p. 231.)

38. TAGETES MICRANTHA Cav.

Anisillo. A small, weedy, strong-scented herb, whose decoction is drunk for stomach trouble.

39. ZINNIA GRANDIFLORA Nutt.

Cincollagas. A weed picked from the fields, a relative of the garden zinnia. Its decoction is drunk as an astringent for diarrhea.

40. CACALIA DECOMPOSITA Gray

Matarique (Mex.); *pi-tcá-wi* (Tar.) This is one of the most esteemed medicinal plants furnished by the Tarahumara Indians of the barrancas to the Mexicans of Chihuahua. There they consider it a cure for diabetes, and pay the Indians a good price for it. The plant is listed in the *Farmacopea Latino-Americana*, which supplies these data:

"It is a plant of a meter in height, flowers in September and October. The root is aromatic and presents, upon breaking, an abundant zone of yellow resin. It comes from the mountains of Santa Cruz (Sonora), and Mapula (Chihuahua).

"The root is employed, since it contains two resins, essential oil, glucoside, tannic acid, and grease. The hydro-alcoholic preparation of the root acts to paralyze the motor system of the striated muscles, and the heart; it produces a light anaesthesia by its local peripheral action.

"The tincture favors scarification of the tissues when applied on ulcers, wounds, etc., by its antiseptic action owing to a coating that it forms.